694. h 8
11

A

SERMON

PREACHED on the 29th of JULY, 1784,

BEING APPOINTED

A Day of General Thankſgiving,

UPON THE

RE-ESTABLISHMENT of PEACE,

By the Rev. WILLIAM HUNTER, M. A.
RECTOR OF ST. ANN's, LIMEHOUSE, LONDON.

WORCESTER:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, BY J. TYMBS;

AND SOLD BY

JOHNSON, St. PAUL's CHURCH-YARD, LONDON;
And PRINCE, OXFORD.

[Price One Shilling.]

BRITISH MUSEUM

A

SERMON.

PSALM CXLV. Ver. 8.

The LORD *is gracious and merciful; long Suffering, and of great Goodneſs.*

IF there is one concluſion of reaſon plainer than another, it is, that God is good, ſupremely good; and therefore the trueſt ſource of human happineſs. To the Philoſopher and Reaſoner of this world, ſyſtems and hypotheſes may occur, which ungratefully ſhade this lovely attribute of the Almighty; and tend to render difficult, irreconcileable, and, I might add, almoſt illegible, the moſt obvious ways of God to man; whereas the diſpoſition and regulation of things, over which he would preſumptuouſly aſſume an empire, and the obliquities and inequalities thence ariſing, if but applied to their true and proper end, *a future ſtate*, would, inſtead of obſcuring, ſerve only to illuſtrate that univerſal benevolence ſo abſolutely inſepa-

rable

rable from the firſt great, almighty, and ineffable Good. But, to a ſcheme of this kind, we often meet with opinions ſomewhat unfriendly;----as their ground is not unaſſumed. Though no favourite of theirs himſelf, yet Chance or Fortune are the favourite Deities of our Philoſopher. ——A God he, perhaps, allows.——Nay, in a conflict, or ſhock of nature, he ſhall confeſs it. For ſtorm and tempeſt, earthquake and thunderbolt, calamity and misfortune, ſickneſs and death, are inexorable creditors.—— But ſtill that things, on the whole, are committed to the direction of blind chance, and that, hence, the particular agency of providential Goodneſs is diſputed;—that the good is greatly overbalanced by the evil, the ſweet by the bitter, which is mingled in the cup of mortals, are, God knows, the great criteria by which too many form their moral diſcernment, and that ſhare of moral conduct they may *chance* to be poſſeſſed of.

To men of this complexion, and deductions ſo unfavourably drawn,---deductions of a head, however modiſhly wiſe, yet not the product, I will affirm, of a virtuous and good heart, I ſhall only, at preſent, obſerve, that to view God through a medium of this ſort, is to place him, at leaſt, in a moſt unamiable light.

For inſtance, to behold him cloathed with the terrors of Omnipotence---arrayed in Glory on his Throne-----to conſider his perfect holineſs---his infinite wiſdom and incontroulable power, and, at the ſame time, to feel ourſelves to be but men, and acknowledge we are no better than ſinners;—weak and wicked; inſufficient to do, or procure any good, and only mighty to commit, and thence liable to *ſuffer* evil. In ſuch circumſtances, I ſay, we cannot, but with the Prophet, tremble, and fall down, or ſtand aghaſt

at

at the preſence of a God.—But to be aſſured, that the ſame God is good, and gracious, and ready to give help in time of need, we may, with confidence, then look up to him as our beſt friend, ready at all times to ſupply our wants, nay, who has ſupported us, to an extenſion of his power, more than we can either deſire, or deſerve.

That we may make a proper uſe of this doctrine, I ſhall endeavour to diſplay, more at large, and in general, his Goodneſs to all his creatures. Whence, probably, as the juſt foundation of that joy and happineſs, we are now aſſembled to participate, this character will appear the more ſtrikingly ſtamped upon the Divine Diſpenſations.—— Thus that Goodneſs, which he would depreciate, may on the Sceptic's own *Data*, become not improperly eſtabliſhed, but rather appoſitely apply to the intention of the day, which the State has thought proper to ſet apart for a thankful commemoration.

In the firſt place, therefore, to turn our thoughts towards the ſubject in hand, *the merciful Goodneſs of God*; on what ground dare we preſume to doubt this lovely attribute of the Almighty? That GOD is good, is as obvious a truth, as that he exiſts. We cannot poſſibly conceive aright of this all-perfect Being, without annexing Goodneſs to his other attributes.——Aſcribe to him, if you pleaſe, every other perfection, and add *infinite* to complete the character, and you would *then* have no ſolid foundation, whereon to build your love, or hopes, witho t the refuge of his Goodneſs. Suppoſe him but infinitely holy, and what mortal eyes could look up to ſuch immaculate glory? Suppoſe him but infinitely juſt, *and extreme to mark what is done amiſs, and who could abide it?*——Suppoſe him infinitely powerful, and we ſhould but fear.——

Suppoſe him infinitely wiſe, and we ſhould but ſuſpect him the more. 'Tis Goodneſs that crowns all God's other perfections; and is the brighteſt ray of the Divinity. Diveſted of this heavenly robe, we might dread him, as an unrelenting Judge, and hate him, as an Almighty Tyrant, but could never *love*, or *delight* ourſelves in the Lord.——Divine worſhip would, indeed, have no long continuance, were not God's Goodneſs as eminent as his Being. It would be in vain to lift up our hands to Heaven, to implore bleſſings from a Being who had none to give; and equally fruitleſs to hope, that judgments might be averted by a God not inclined to ſpare. Or could any religion be preſerved towards ſuch a Being, it muſt be the ſervile dread of ſlaves, or the ſuperſtitious awe of Idolaters and Barbarians, not the genuine and willing obedience of Sons towards their Father in Heaven. Nay, Idolaters and Barbarians *themſelves* have generally annexed Goodneſs to the character of their Deities. For though ſome, more groſsly ignorant than others, have conceived of their Gods as the moſt ſanguinary tyrants, and objects of dread and horror, and in conſequence of ſuch conceptions, have formed their idols in the moſt hideous figures, and drenched their altars with ſtreams of human blood;——Yet the generality of heathen nations have entertained juſter notions of the Divinity, and thought Goodneſs alone a title to Godhead. The more any man was exerciſed in humanity, and doing good among his fellow-creatures, the more godlike he was eſteemed.——Kind offices done, uſeful arts invented, and great deliverances wrought by the living, were not unfrequently rewarded with altars and temples erected to the dead. Nay, ſometimes, we may have ſeen ſacrifices attempted to be offered to the living, as well as the dead,

for

for ſome ſignal benefit conferred, which bore a reſemblance of the *divine Goodneſs*, or might ſeem the effect of his power. This the people of Lyſtra would have done to the Apoſtles, when they ſaw how Paul had healed the cripple by a word of his mouth.——*They liſt up their voices, ſaying, in the ſpeech of Lycaonia, the Gods are come down to us in the likeneſs of men.* The moſt ancient Idolatry in the world ſeems to have taken its riſe from this opinion of Goodneſs being an eſſential ingredient in the character of the Godhead. Hence, for ſome ages, men worſhipped (as ſome ſtill worſhip) the Sun, Moon, and Stars, Fire and Animals, and whatever elſe appeared to them to contribute moſt to the convenience and happineſs of life. The principle was right, and the gratitude reaſonable. They were only wrong directed. They ſtopped at the inſtrument, without riſing to its author, and mover. They worſhipped the work inſtead of the workmaſter. Beſides this general opinion of all the good we enjoy proceeding from a principle of divine Goodneſs, the teſtimony of the wiſeſt men, in the heathen world, might be adduced, to confirm our belief, and hope in God, as the author, and giver of all Good. You find the Title of *Father* aſcribed to him by the moſt learned Sages of Greece and Rome; which implied all the tenderneſs, and benevolence to his creatures, that a parent could ſhew to his children.——As to deny his *beneficence*, they thought the ſame as to deny his *exiſtence*: For, with them, Goodneſs was his robe of glory, unarrayed with which the Majeſty of Heaven was but meanneſs.

Indeed ſpeculative men, exerciſing their rational faculties in the ſearch of truth, and the inveſtigation of the works of Nature, could not well overlook ſo obvious a ſubject, the regular revolution of Sun and Moon, the

ſucceſſion of the ſeaſons, producing ſeed-time and harveſt; the whole order and harmony of the Univerſe; all ſubſervient to the uſe and happineſs of Man, muſt neceſſarily lead them up, and point at the Author of Order, and Parent of all Good. Where the *Effects* were ſo viſible, the *Cauſe* muſt ſtand indiſputably confeſſed.—— Moreover, if with theſe obſervations, we link the limited powers, and traces of perfection, in the creatures, eſpecially in man, an original fountain of power unlimited, and perfection infinite, become hence fairly deducible. For if man finds in himſelf a diſpoſition *to do good and to communicate—to be pitiful and patient towards all men—to comfort the ſeeble minded, to ſupport the weak, to ſeed the hungry, and clothe the naked*——how great and inexpreſſible muſt be the mercy and goodneſs of him, *who is the Father of us all, and of whoſe fulneſs we have all received!*

Thus might a cool and ſerious enquirer have reaſoned, without ſuperior aids. But the light of nature and reaſon, *ſtriking* as it is, we need not wholly truſt. For our better inſtruction herein, we have a further guide, which *cannot err*. It is *divine Revelation*. Which is another moſt cogent argument, and contains the cleareſt declaration of the divine Goodneſs.

God foreſeeing the degeneracy of man, after the fall, did, with his firſt formation, implant in him a knowledge of his Maker; and left a record of himſelf, as the Creator of the world, to all future ages. And if, in the hiſtory of the Jewiſh Legiſlator, you have what excites your ſublimeſt idea, you have, too, what commands your higheſt and moſt loving admiration. If you are aſtoniſhed with the *wiſdom*, you are alſo charmed with the *goodneſs* of God. In the awful proceſs of creative

power,

power, you ſee, on every effluent act of the Deity, drawn by an Angel's pencil, in letters of gold, *Behold, every thing that was made is very good.*——Every thing fitted to its place, and ſtation, and as good as its nature would admit of. Amidſt theſe, man you behold formed as the principal inhabitant of the new globe.——But he appears not, you obſerve, on the ſtage of life, till the completion of its other parts, which were intended for his uſe, his contemplation, and wonder.

He was not only made to taſte and ſee how gracious the Lord was, by the enjoyment of the creatures, but he was made *in the Image of God*,——endowed with a reaſonable ſoul, with a mind raiſed and elevated, like his body;---with faculties fitted to inveſtigate and comprehend the ſublimeſt truths;---to qualify him to converſe with his Maker, and to ſuſtain without terror his majeſtick preſence and appearance.——As his happy portion or abode, Paradiſe, or the garden of Eden, is aſſigned him. No doubt, the propereſt employ the great Creator could beſtow, in this infant ſtate of nature. Civil policy had now no being, and the modern arts were unneceſſary. Here was exerciſe enough to promote his health, and buſy his bodily organs; whilſt his ſoul muſt be daily improving into a ſenſe of pious gratitude to his Maker, from obſerving the genuine beauties, and primitive perfection of his work.

And now view man in this bliſsful ſtate, and as he originated with his Creator, and what room is there to cenſure, or, rather, what an infinite field of praiſe is there not opened for the divine Goodneſs?

Here I am ſenſible it will be objected, that Paradiſe is now fled, and with it all the bleſſings of nature, and favour

of God——that life is now but miſery; and labour and ſorrow but the portions of the ſons of men.

Againſt ſuch complaint it might and muſt be contended that God *is ſtill gracious, and his mercy over all his works. Heaven and Earth declare his Glory.*——We abound with bleſſings for the comfort and ſupport of life. God is ſtill our Father and Preſerver His eyes ſtill *run to and fro through* the whole earth, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong in the behalf of his people,——Nay, he giveth *to all liberally to enjoy, and maketh his Sun to riſe on the evil and on the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt.* And we may ſtrictly conclude, that the general ſufferings of men proceed not from the *want*, but from the *plenty* and *abuſe* of God's Bleſſings.

But to give the objector's argument a ſtill farther force, and the plaintive ſtrain of the complainant its wiſhed-for latitude, as we promiſed, in the outſet of this diſcourſe, to try their merits, ſo let us ſee whether or no they deſerve the credit they challenge, or they do not rather apply to our preſent purpoſe, and enforce the doctrine we would inculcate, by illuſtrating, even on their own ſcheme, that Goodneſs of divine Providence which they would thus pretend to depreciate and degrade.

Suppoſe, for inſtance, we ſons of ſorrow, as they would call us, are expoſed to the diſaſters of chance or fortune, as no doubt they have a place in the conſtitution of things, what then? Can the merciful Goodneſs of God hereby ſuffer any diminution?—No——the moſt exceptionable means---the very under parts in the drama of nature, ſerve only to throw a greater ſplendor on the condeſcending ſweetneſs, the happier diſpenſations of the great, the Almighty Conductor——We are hereby puſhed on to the exerciſe of the moſt heroic virtues, as God's providential adminiſtration

adminiſtration becomes more conſpicuous by thoſe irregularities, at which his rectifying finger is *uninterruptedly* pointed. In ſickneſs and affliction you behold the noble exertions of patience and fortitude.——In war and calamity, ſtill more arduous diſplays of virtue.——In one, the recovery of health to a diſtempered ſoul.——In the other, the reſtoration of glory to a degenerated nation.——Deviations and obliquities, with a world like ours, a probationary ſtate, a ſtate for the trial of moral agents, muſt be inſeparably connected. For ſuppoſing the doctrine of the *Stoa*, an inflexibility of Fate, to invade our Chriſtian School, the fineſt ſenſibilities, the nobleſt exertions muſt ſicken and die.——Prayer itſelf would be rationally ſuperſeded, and the interpoſition of Providence neceſſarily deemed inadmiſſible.——Indeed, what room for the exerciſe of private, or public virtues, civil or ſocial duties, were a kind of irreſiſtibility ſtamped on the face of nature? Induſtry, courage, and perſeverance, faith, hope, and reſignation, would find no place in our Chriſtian Creed or practice, nor our moſt earneſt ſupplications acceſs at the throne of Grace.

Not ſo in what is called a fortuitous, or contingent ſtate. Chance, or fortune, probabilities and poſſibilities modify human nature into a variety of ſhapes, and give riſe to numerous ſchemes, projects, and meaſures. The events of life, as they are coloured, impreſs the mind with different ſenſations, rouſe or depreſs, but never, except in the caſe of ſome conſtitutional infirmity, lead it to deſpond. In our worſt fortune, theſe, under a divine agency, give us ever room to hope.——Beſides, ſo far are they from being deſtructive of our happineſs, that we behold them, frequently, productive of ſome ſignal good:—As how often have we ſeen cauſes the moſt improbable leading to a train

of proſperous events—means the moſt inadequate in nature, ſubſervient to the moſt momentous ends:——and circumſtances, apparently, the moſt unfavourable, big with ruin and diſgrace, ſtill opening an avenue to fortune and honours? So that, amidſt the inſtability and uncertainty of human affairs, the labours and ſorrows of the ſons and daughters of affliction, on the complainants own principle, much matter of comfort may be collected in our journey through life——On the whole, therefore, whilſt the evil we experience is leſs prevalent than the good, and the bleſſings we enjoy more than the miſeries we ſuffer, or, however, more than we either deſerve or could expect, we have abundant reaſon to be thankful.

Man, individually conſidered, or as forming a link in the great ſocial chain, more eſpecially of this iſland, has poured upon him innumerable bleſſings, which might attune all his powers to ſongs of praiſe, and gratitude to his great benefactor.——To ſhare in domeſtic comforts—to promote a mutual intercourſe of good offices---to breathe, with ſecurity, his native air—to enjoy civil and religious liberty—and to live under the ſway of a government mild, equal, and impartial, are ſurely objects of no light eſtimation. And what greatly, at this juncture, enhances their value is to behold the great pilot of nature, after riding in the tempeſt and whirlwind, in clouds and thick darkneſs, in all the horrors of devaſtation, and waſte-laying war, commanding order from confuſion, civil noiſe and madneſs ſpeaking into an harmonious calm, and once more *giving his people the bleſſing of peace.* The beauties and bounties of nature, the refreſhing breeze, the foſtering ſhower, the laughing valley, the bending harveſt, the all-animating orb of light, with the circling year, may ſeize,

may

may arreſt our attention, and excite in us a wonder, a love, and admiration of the beneficent Author. But after all, amidſt the carnage and deſolation of the ſword, with the conſequent jealouſies, hates, and fears, for ever attendant on political diſputes, no juſt reliſh, no genuine taſte can be found for theſe, and many other delightful ſweets.---In ſuch a ſcene of terror and confuſion, the half averted eye ſickens at pleaſure, and a chill damps all the powers of enjoyment. It is under the protection, alone, of peaceful ſecurity, and a guardian God, that the organs are properly and ſenſibly affected by the ſeveral objects, to which they are fitted. Such, we may felicitate ourſelves, is the preſent ſtate of this kingdom; and ſuch, I hope in God, it will long continue. Without therefore indulging to a melancholy retroſpect on our paſt national fortune, or holding up to view the authors and abettors of the complicated evils brought upon us; though their fate, if fairly criminated, we deny not, might once have aſcertained our health and vigour as a people——but judicial blindneſs, charity would induce us to believe, was perhaps only theirs, and if ſo, you'll ſay how great was that blindneſs!——Without recurring to niceties and diſtinctions, between the governing and the governed, and defining the preciſe limits of privilege and prerogative, for which, and other ſtate remedies, there appears to be no preſent demand, except where the madneſs of the people calls for ſome ſeaſonable reſtraint; for as to kingly power in theſe realms, it ſeems to be now little more than nominal.——Without, I ſay, then, dwelling on the diſmal and unhappy ſide of things, let us look forward, and gratefully meet the proſpect that begins to brighten upon us. And let us convert to the moſt beneficial advantages—the beſt pur-

poſes we can, *the treaties* now finally ratified between us and our enemies. And doubt not yet but we ſhall in due time find happily verified, if not wanting to ourſelves, *That greater is He that is for us than they who are againſt us.*

The firſt proof we ſhall give of our wiſh to profit by our paſt follies, and to cultivate to its proper ends and uſes this auſpicious ſeaſon, held out to us by the great Giver of all Good, is, to bury, in one poſitive act of oblivion, every ſeed of animoſity that ſubſiſts among us, and to join hand and heart in one united exertion to promote the general weal.——Thus, though ſomewhat fallen, yet, thou Miſtreſs of Kingdoms! if peace *is in all thy borders, ſo ſhall plenteouſneſs be in all thy palaces.* The petty contentions for place and power will be now loſt in a happier competition, a more honeſt rivalry.——Not who ſhall be greateſt, but the conteſt will be, who ſhall be the wiſeſt to plan, and the readieſt to execute meaſures the moſt ſalutary for the body politic. Hence the arts and ſciences, in whoſe ſtudy and cultivation this nation ſtands unſurpaſſed, will preſerve their native luſtre, and trade and commerce, lately our glory, as they are ever our beſt political defence and ſecurity, and the very ſinews of this empire will again recover their priſtine health and vigour.

Thus far, and farther we may hazard an opinion; and *that* perhaps not problematic. Beſides, what we have already advanced, might it not, without the imputation of arrogance, be again ſubmitted to thoſe who, if they preſide not, would ſtill predominate at the great helm of affairs, as well as to our other guardians of the ſtate, that union and harmony in council, temper and moderation in debate, ſo often and ſo affectionately recommended, *by the Father of his people*, would, eſpecially, if qualified with ſomewhat more

more ſerioufneſs, and ſenatorial gravity, give greater weight to their deliberations, greater ſanction to their edicts;--and at the ſame time do more towards the recovery of *that tarniſhed and violated dignity*, ſo loudly complained of, than by ſeeking another, and perhaps leſs decent mode of redreſs.——And we might moreover add, that, in order to render our happineſs leſs precarious, and our ſucceſs leſs improbable, nothing gives greater permanency and ſtability to maxims and meaſures, than, when under the preceding concomitants, they come recommended, by being drawn from a frequent intercourſe with thoſe who are moſt converſant and beſt read in the public and buſy ſcenes of life. Theory and ſpeculation may do well; *but fact and experience alone* can accommodate to the mutability and thoſe viciſſitudes to which this empire, in one of its main ſupports, is neceſſarily expoſed. And over this, nothing, I will affirm, but a practical inſight, derived from the beſt information, can exerciſe a juſt, efficient, and beneficial controul.——Such a one, I mean, as will exclude a benumbing torpor, or ſtagnation, from transfuſing itſelf into any of the more conſiderable occupations of the country——Such a one as will, in ſhort, keep up a national ſpirit of induſtry through *the whole*.——So that, while the main ſprings are preſerved perfect and entire, the leſſer wheels of government may remain unexpoſed to any laſting, or irreparable injury. As in the *natural*, ſo in the *civil* world. There is an active, ſubtle, penetrating ſpirit, which, in order to give the ſeveral parts their juſt and proper tone, muſt pervade the civil ſyſtem, and, like an electrical power, communicate itſelf through the ſeveral links of the political chain.——It is this ſpirit that gives ſtrength and energy to the hand of the artificer, and comforts, if poſſible, ſtill more the heart of the poor labourer.

It is, if I may ſo ſay, the very life and ſoul of the commercial body. It will be buſied in encouraging the powers of invention, foſtering every naſcent art, opening and diſcloſing the various ſources and channels of domeſtic and foreign intercourſe, and wherever deficiencies and abuſes prevail, in giving a ſeaſonable ſupply, and due direction to the more imperfect parts. And above all, if *not imaginary*, in alleviating the grievances, and removing the burdens of, when rightly ruled, an honeſt, generous, brave, and loyal people.——The effects of ſuch an animating, chearing power it is not difficult to predict. Induſtry and perſeverance, ſubmiſſion and obedience, founded on the only ſecure baſis of human conduct, *that of gratitude and love*, muſt be the natural reſult. Whence muſt as neceſſarily flow an eaſy compliance with the impoſts and exigencies of the ſtate, and when called forth to the more arduous trials of duty, the warmeſt emotions, and the moſt ſtrengthened exertions, *that can give the hearts and arms of Britons.*

That this line of conduct is not impracticable, nay, that the hour for its experiment is all our own, ſhould be a comfortable aſſurance.——Let us not entertain a ſpirit of deſpondency, nor *be faithleſs, but believing.* And, like the faithful Soldier of Chriſt, give to that belief the efficiency of *our very beſt deeds.*——Thus ſhall we, hereafter, have ample ground for triumph and exultation, and behold re-riſing upon us the ſun of ſplendour and glory, the halcyon days of peace and proſperity, whoſe benigner rays, and milder influences, may we never more *judicially* ſhut out from our eyes.

As one happy preſage, in its preſent circumſtances, to this nation, and not, we will truſt, the laſt demonſtration

of

of God's goodneſs to us, we may ſeem to have preternaturally, at this juncture, ſent us, like the young Iſraelite, into the land of Egypt, a guardian friend, and deliverer. And if virtue, as is generally believed, be the trueſt wiſdom, and honeſty the beſt policy—If God has promiſed to vouchſafe theſe his more immediate preſence, we may then confide, that now, as in days of old, *the young ſtateſman* will be ſtill a favourite of Heaven;—that *the Lord will be ſtill with him, and make all that he doeth to proſper in his hands.*——In ſhort, if the heart equals the head, or rather ſuperior intellects be only rivalled by ſuperior morals, ſuch concentrated abilities *muſt* go to form *that ILLUSTRIOUS CHARACTER in whom, as heretofore*, we may repoſe our moſt implicit, our happieſt confidence.——Nor can we therefore wonder, that the ſtern virtues of a *Cato*, or the amiable traits in the character of a *Scipio*, were the delight of every eye, and the theme of every tongue.

Thus has God, once more, bleſſed this land in building us up again and not deſtroying us.——And now what are the correſpondent affections that ſhould be awakened in our breaſts, and what are the uſes to which we ſhould apply this comfortable doctrine of divine goodneſs?

Their deſcription, though occaſional, is obvious and ſhort. The principal leſſon we are taught is love and gratitude. Firſt, to provoke one another, if our gracious God is ſo tender of us, to mutual acts of amity, and the kindlieſt affection. For, ſurely, there can be no ſweeter, or fairer offspring than that of peace;—*Harmony and Love.* Let then from this bleſſed day all *bitterneſs, wrath, and clamour and evil ſpeaking, be put away from us, with all malice.*—— And let the ſame ſpirit be in us which was in Chriſt Jeſus, ——A ſpirit, however laudable, under a due exerciſe, yet

not *confined* to the narrow circle of friends or relations, party or perſuaſion, but moving in the more enlarged ſphere of ſocial and civil life;—complying, as far as poſſible, with every duty it enjoins; and promoting, to the utmoſt, the general happineſs.——As men and fellow-creatures, an univerſal philanthropy will inflame our affections.——As citizens and ſubjects, we ſhall be careful to *render unto all their due, tribute to whom tribute, honour to whom honour.——Unto Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's, and unto God the things that are God's.* To both,

Secondly, as creatures, and ſubjects, we owe a ſtrict, and faithful allegiance, founded on gratitude. And we ſhould do well, and perhaps conſult our happieſt intereſts, were our duty and regards (not to confine them to mere political diſtinctions) for earthly majeſty more generally recommended by our veneration, *and love for the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.* He muſt, indeed, be the worſt of men whom *kindneſs* cannot conquer, whom *endearments* cannot oblige, whom *gratitude* cannot bind to the intereſts of his benefactor. When we violate the laws of God in any known and common inſtance of duty, we are guilty of rebellion againſt our *ſovereign and Judge.* But when we reject his love, and ſpurn at his mercies, we injure our *beſt friend.* The one is a ſin of ſimple diſobedience. The other, a crime of impious ingratitude.

Let us then take care how *we deſpiſe the riches of his goodneſs, and turn his grace aud patience into laſciviouſneſs.* His mercy was intended as a cure for deſpair, and a call to reformation; not as an encouragement to criminal exceſs or ſinful preſumption. No. A God of mere mercy, without juſtice or judgement, is the creature of a bad heart, or the figment of a ſickly brain. God is holy

as

as well as merciful, juſt as well as good. And we muſt *return* unto the Lord before he will *really* have mercy, and to *our God* before he will *abundantly* pardon.

If, therefore, of his divine goodneſs, he would but be pleaſed to grant to us all, of every denomination, wiſe, underſtanding, and grateful hearts.——If he would alſo continue **his judgments to the King, and give his righteouſneſs to the King's ſon, then might the mountains be truly ſaid to bring peace, and the little hills righteouſneſs to the people——Then might this our land rejoice, yea, the multitude of the iſles might be glad thereof.*

*Pſalm lxxii. 1. Ib. xcvii. 1.

FINIS.

BRITISH MUSEUM